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By SDT/VSW Date 7/3/97

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

2 DEC 1971

Honorable William P. Rogers  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Bill:

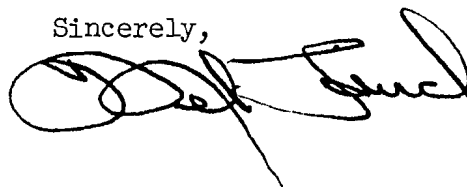
As you know, our Ambassador to Libya has asked for guidance in explaining the absence of a U.S. decision on Libya's requests for major military equipment (F-5s, C-130s and 175mm artillery). Concurrently, the Spanish Ambassador has asked Alex Johnson for a U.S. position on an export license for five F-5s from the Spanish plant (CASA) for delivery to Libya.

It seems to me the Spanish request might offer some promise for partially resolving our dilemma. We could instruct Joe Palmer to tell the Libyans quite frankly that (i) our decision on their requests is tied to our overall arms policy to the Mid-East; (ii) in view of the present situation, we wish to limit arms deliveries to all countries in the area, and we cannot, consequently, give an answer to their requests at this time; (iii) in deference to our relations with Libya we are prepared to approve a Spanish request for an F-5 export license for a limited number (up to eight) of F-5Bs (the trainer version); and, in the meantime, we will continue to review Libya's other requests against developments in the area.

While this may not be completely satisfactory to the Libyans, it would demonstrate some forthcomingness on our part. This would also allow us to release the aircraft we have had earmarked for the Libyans and avoid further storage costs. There is, of course, always the risk of some unfavorable publicity, particularly since the F-5Bs might be linked to training Libyans to fly the Mirages being delivered from France. I would think, however, that the non-combatant nature of the aircraft and the indirect role of the U.S. would tend to mitigate such criticism.

I appreciate that this is not an easy decision. I believe, however, that the course I have proposed would be least disruptive to our Mid-East posture while at the same time offering some promise of maintaining our considerable interests in Libya. I continue to believe those interests will be best served by avoiding the appearance of closing the door completely on their requests.

Sincerely,




DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
September 6, 2007

Sac Def Cont Nr. X- 5238

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DC 12-5 LIBYA